

had some really positive changes over the past few years, and it allowed me to go off insulin and reduce medications for a period of time. The key factors for positive results for me were:

- Being proactive and thoughtful about what I was doing and eating;
- Partnering with my primary care physician to stay on top of things;
- Scheduling active exercise regularly;
- Journaling my activity and eating;
- Joining Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) to give me an accountability group, encouragement and weekly programs.

I have not done as well this past year because of a number of issues, but because I know the steps to take to see new improvement, I know that 2013 will be a good year. I feel better when my weight is better managed and when I exercise regularly.

I looked at the issues that I'm facing in my life, which are High Cholesterol and Over Weight, and starting to make little changes. I started eating more Salmon, Vegetables, Salads and try to do some type of exercise every day and take vitamins. When I'm at work I walk the stairs, the store or to my car and at home I try to eat before 7 pm and I exercise most evenings. During the summer I love to ride my bicycle to work and around the neighborhood when weather permits. Sometimes it doesn't seem to be working but, I try not to get discouraged because this is for my benefit not to get acknowledgments from other but it's nice when I get those as well.

The wellness program has had a great impact on my life and health. I am a type 2 diabetic and the wellness program offered me an extra chance to meet with a community health educator and receive new information about additional health risks, areas to improve with simple changes to my diet and exercise routine and how everyday decisions can help improve my health by just being aware of how my daily choices affect my health in the long run.

I THINK THIS PROGRAM WILL HELP PEOPLE IF THEY LET IT.

THE MAIN THING THAT I HAVE CHANGED WAS MY SMOKING, I WAS A 2 TO 2 1/2 A PACK DAY SMOKER, FOR OVER 45 YEARS. IT HAS HELP 10 FOLD IN HOW I HAVE FELT SINCE I QUIT, NO MORE SINUS HEADACHES, WAKING UP COUGHING, SPITTING UP JUNK, LIGHTING UP FIRST THING AFTER I WOKE UP, SMELLING LIKE STALE SMOKE. I WISH I WOULD HAVE QUIT YEARS AGO. I WISH MY WIFE WOULD QUIT, BUT SHE HAS HER OWN DRAGONS TO DEAL WITH, I'M NOW BREATHING A LITTLE SECOND HAND SMOKE. I WAS DIAGNOSE WITH COPD 9 YEARS AGO AND TO STUPID TO QUIT. UP TILL THAT TIME I THOUGHT I WAS IMMUNE TO GETTING IT, MAYBE IT WOULD SKIP A GENERATION, WRONG. IF THERE WERE ANYTHING I WOULD TELL TO OTHERS WOULD BE QUIT SOONER THAN LATER. WHAT YOU HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO IS NOT VERY PLEASANT, MY BROTHER IS SLOWLY DYING FROM COPD. ITS HARD TO SEE HIM WITHOUT THINKING THAT WILL BE ME IN A COUPLE YEARS. IT'S NOT A PLEASANT WAY TO PASS, IF ANY ARE. IT HAS ALSO BEEN HARD TO KEEP WEIGHT OFF, HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SOLVE THAT ONE, NOT BEING ABLE TO EXERCISE AS YOU WOULD LIKE BECAUSE YOU HAVE A HARD TIME BREATHING. I THINK IT IS NEVER TO LATE TO QUIT, ANYTHING WILL HELP.

After being a smoker for over 20 years, I have now been a non-smoker for 3 years. I have been a member for 1 year of the YMCA and the weight loss has been slow but so far I have lost 10 pounds. Overall my health as improved so much; I have begun eating healthier. I do not mind you using my story to help others.

Hello. Thank you for the congratulatory email. You may use my name, and here's my short story:

The City of Milwaukee wellness program has pushed me to start living a healthier lifestyle. It began with the health questionnaire and blood work. With those results, and the help of a consultation with a health expert, I was able to know exactly what I needed to improve. The biggest thing I've changed is my eating habits. Eating less junk food and more fruits and vegetables has given me more energy throughout the day, which is exactly what I need as a firefighter. My family has noticed a change too! Making changes to living a healthier lifestyle will lead to positive changes both short and long term

When I completed the Wellness last August 2012, here is what I was doing.

I had quit smoking Nov 2006 & never turned back.
I walked or ran 3 times a week.
I ate a lot of salad. Sometimes without dressing (just olive oil).
I cook a lot with olive oil.
I drank juice & tons of water.
I took a daily multi-vitamin.

After participating in the wellness program, it motivated me to stop talking about changing my life one day and why not start changing it right now. I made the change right away by starting exercising more. The exercising caused me to now look at my eating habits. This, I also changed. Now food is not the number 1 priority in my life. My health and family are now top priority. My family has also noticed the change and the more outgoing I am. Exercising and healthy eating plays a major part in our family life. It really helps that the program teaches you that if no changes are made there would be early consequences.

These are the things that are working for me:

1. Have a wife who is scared of developing diabetes, and be supportive of her efforts by participating in them.
2. get a dog that requires large amounts of exercise, and commit to it. We each walk him once a day, but go together when we can.
3. Steamable frozen veggy packs as snack food. High intake with low caloric or glycemic load. Roundies makes 12oz packs of lots of different veggies both single types and combined which make post work snacks healthier.
4. Make sure you are getting restful sleep. I have sleep apnea, and using a CPAP machine allows me to get good sleep, which then gives me the energy to exercise.

5. Find a hobby that requires movement, like Geo-caching. You can do it anywhere on earth(great on vacations where you are on a budget), you find cool out of the way places you didn't know existed, and there are variable difficulties of access to the cache depending on how in shape you are, so as you get more in shape you can do harder caches.

6. don't do it to lose weight. Do it to have more energy and endurance. Those things come far more quickly than weight loss, are of longer term benefit, and can be seen as nice rewards, even when you can't physically see the weight coming off. Plus more energy and more endurance means longer more strenuous exercise, which will help drop the weight in the longer term.

do not crash diet. do not exclude any foods, but modulate the amounts. restriction breeds bingeing.

Thank you for the kudos concerning my health improvements. Yes you may use my name. My changes have enhanced my standard of living for myself and my family by imparting 5 areas of concern:

Socially by creating and cultivating close relationships held together by loyalty, commitment and trust. These relationships and friendships became stronger over time as we rejoiced in strengths and accepted weaknesses as advice as examples were given to rebuild and/or enhance this area.

Emotionally by relating that when we as individuals act out of emotions without control or conscience is immature, irresponsible, and often hurtful to others. I have become an example to accept what I cannot change and to change what I can. I infiltrate that life will always have shortcomings and struggles.

Mentally I recognized my personal needs and continuously strive to meet them. I determine what is really important and consciously choose to eliminate those activities that are unimportant and/or unhealthy. I promote that the strength of character is developed through adversity. I viewed my life's challenges as positive growth opportunities and those difficulties, problems, pain, and losses in life are inevitably guaranteed to everyone and are necessary for growth. I identified the ingredients that delivered personal fulfillment and prioritized them into balance with my life's activities and consistently remain true to myself with these findings.

Physically I avoid destructive habits such as alcohol and drug usage. I believe a healthy body is the foundation of a healthy soul and I am to recognize the benefits in regular exercise, adequate rest, and nutritious eating.

Spiritually I explore the definitions of my purpose and destiny in life. I increasingly exemplify that I have distinct talents, abilities, interests and values that only I can combine to make a positive contribution to society. Finally I illustrate that my purpose can be anything that holds meaning to myself.

I know I have went a bit long and defined but I believe that fast food responses match how we live and that we need more well balanced meals of words and conversation to hold on to in 2013 on our journey towards health and wellness.

Thanks once again Brad for considering me as a candidate towards assisting others to become more healthy and influential in this life of ever growing possibilities in happiness and wellness.

Make it a great day ☺

I would be willing to submit the following anonymously:

The City of Milwaukee Wellness Assessments helped me get my positive habits back on track. Sitting down one-on-one with someone looking at my personal results and being able to ask questions, which pertained to me only provided me with the information I needed to address dietary issues. The nurse's open and a friendly approach made the discussion very conversational, but the real factor, which helped me make changes, was her approach of 'you didn't get here overnight, so you won't change overnight'. That was great to hear and helped me start w/baby steps to eat more fruits and vegetable for a while, then to stay away from tempting treats, moving on to drinking a few less glasses of wine and keeping up with moderate exercise. Over the past year, these items have become habits and I was able to see results at 2012 assessment. I'm looking forward to next year's appointments to see if I'll do better yet!

How cool! Thank you! I'm fine with using my first name. Are you going to say "Kari S." or something along those lines? Where are these stories going to be? Like on a handout or a website?

I basically just gave myself attainable, yet challenging goals to accomplish. For example, for the first time ever, I signed up for not one, but two 5k runs in the Milwaukee area last year. (I am most definitely NOT a runner.) So, not only was I working out and training for these, but I was eating right in order to get the most out of those workouts. I really wanted to do well, and that gave me tons of motivation. In the end, I surpassed my goals and made myself SO proud. That was the best feeling in the world.

I'm just shy of the halfway mark to meet my weight loss goal - 20 lbs down, another 25 to go. Most of my changes to date have focused on changing my unhealthy food habits while embracing the fact that I'm a foodie, a baker, and an unapologetic chocoholic. I research recipes on sites, like Eating Well, and I've learned how to make healthy substitutions in my cooking and baking whenever I can. I plan my meals two weeks in advance, so I can make balanced meals at home, avoid skipping meals, and stop my regular fast food trips - good for the body and the pocketbook. At this point, I'm reintroducing regular exercise into my routine. I'm not really one to frequent gyms or jump on exercise equipment, so I've sought out exercise that I enjoy, like dance and yoga, and added it to my weekly schedule.

After having foot surgery in fall 2011, my immobility took its toll on my overall fitness level. A friend passed along a "couch to 5k" running plan that she found online (check out Hal Higdon!), so I put it on a calendar that worked for me. I needed a goal to work toward so I decided to do one event every month from March through November to keep me on track through 2012. I didn't quite meet my goal, but had a great time trying, and the running plan helped me work toward it while staying injury free. I even took third place in a 5k trail run!

If you use my story, please don't use my name. I have not reached my weight loss goal yet (on the other hand, I have not gained it back.) My knees are a bit better now. Mostly I made vegetables and fruit a bigger part of my diet, and cut back on empty calories. I go to the farmers' market almost every weekend when it is open. Also I take the bus when I can, and walk more.

I guess I can give all the credit of my achievements to my wife. She has been on me to eat better and it has worked. Eating more of a balanced diet (that she makes for me) and taking proper vitamins helped and with her pushing me, it is easier not to forget.

I started the Wellness program at 25 years old. Typically major health risks don't effect my age group until I'm much older. However, participating in this program has helped me understand the advantage of starting sooner than later, when it comes to my health. I'm more confident that I have more control over my health, instead of waiting for the worst to happen, and then try to fix it. My change of habits start now, not later!

My suggestion is that you seriously take control of your health because you only get one body in your lifetime. We need to change our attitude on how we handle stress, get sufficient sleep, exercise, eat healthy and spend Sundays as a day of rest and less stress. Take time to enjoy the simple things in life. Money doesn't buy happiness, but attitude and respect for yourself can.

My Personal Success Story: "I am a father of two, with very limited time to get into the gym. I regulate my weekly schedule with my babysitter, allowing me to get into the gym for up to two hours per day. I began this personal project by altering my diet, putting a daily emphasis on vegetables and fruits, while limiting my intake of starches. I wake up every morning, take my daily vitamin, then I make a fresh Greek yogurt and fruit smoothie. Then I make a large salad or have veggies with lunch, repeating this once again for dinner. I'm very into weight training, so I compliment my daily workouts with a pre-workout supplement and a post protein shake. Things are looking better for me, but more importantly, for my family."

The Bible tells us not to despise small beginnings, and I know we all have heard the saying "inch by inch everything's a cinch". Well my small beginning started when I stopped eating after 9PM- I mean nothing, not a grape, a raisin, not even a sunflower seed kernel. Being the night owl that I was, I started going to bed at 10 PM (needed my beauty rest). I drank plenty of water with or without my lemon and worked out on my elliptical for 1 hour every day Monday- Friday. On Saturday I would walk around the mall or do some yard work or even a special project or two with my sisters anything to keep me moving. Sunday was my rest day, although I had a jumping and shouting good time in church. I look and feel better I have more energy and my hair, nails and skin are improving as well. The wellness program helps you to do just that; it helps you to stay well.

I do not know what changes I have made except I do walk more and more aware of what I eat, as I get older it gets harder to keep the weight off. There is no drastic changes just small everyday manageable stuff.

Four years ago my wife and I Joined the YMCA to begin a routine in exercise and to do it as a family with our children. Although we saw some results, we soon came to a plateau where the gym was becoming a chore. When the Wellness program started it reinforced to us, as a family, that we had a long way to go

in leading a healthy life. What we learned was that not only did our exercise habits have to change, but our diet as well. My wife and I re-assessed our exercise routine and eating habits. In doing so, we made some minor changes that were easy to manage. As a result we have made huge improvements in our health that positively affected our ~~our~~ children as well. More importantly our stress levels have reduced as a whole.

The biggest change I made was consistently working out. I found that I really love doing Bikram yoga; it's a challenge that I enjoy which keeps me going back. After years of struggling to stick with a consistent exercise routine, I strongly believe you have to find something you love to do in order to stick with it, even if it's outside the norm. Our family has also been slowly shifting our eating habits to more whole, clean foods which has also positively affected our health. It's been great to participate in this program while making these lifestyle changes with my family because we've been able to see how these outward changes have positively affected our 'health statistics'. Thanks

I try to make healthy choices into healthy habits by commitment to goals. I exercise every day for at least 45 minutes, whether I want to or not. By doing this, I find that if I do take a day off, I actually miss it. I have made an effort to get more fruits and vegetables into my diet by seeking out recipes that will make me enjoy them more, and by buying local produce when possible. Finally, I recommend eating a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast. It's filling, keeps you warm and actually helps your cholesterol numbers. I still have some bad eating habits, but I look at it as progress, not perfection.

I would like to say that this program has changed the way I eat, I have joined Weight Watchers and am down about 100lbs. I have started on preventative cholesterol medication due to a family history of heart disease. I have joined the gym attending at least 3 times a week at 4:30 am before going to work. I have also picked up Zumba twice a week and I can tell you what a great feeling it is to be an example at home and at work to promote a healthy lifestyle. It has trickled down to my entire family, we have all changed the way we eat and increased exercise. Thanks Wellness!!!

As far as what I've done to improve my personal health...well, there are several things. First and foremost, I had to figure out what motivates me. I'm not generally a competitive person...so doing activities with/against other people doesn't generally motivate me to move. I know that works for a lot of people, and if it does...more power to you...but for me...no dice. What -does- work for me is pushing myself to constantly improve myself (from weight, to times I exercise in a week, to calories consumed, etc.) over a span of time. Key to my improvements have been the ability to measure and quantify my food/calorie intake and my exercise. Mix that with the fact that I'm a big technology junky, and you got 2 smartphone apps that I think have done wonders for me. Loseit and RunKeeper have been pivotal in my creation and maintaining of healthy habits. There are many of both these types of apps, these are just the two I've found that work well for me. I've found that if I monitor what I eat, and KNOW how many calories I am taking into my body, that alone helps my health, and encourages me to eat more healthy. That, mixed with trying to maintain/beat my goals on runkeeper (which is not just for running, mind you) has done wonders for me.

When the City of Milwaukee first introduced the Wellness program, I found it to be intrusive, as well as an invasion of my medical privacy. I felt left with no choice but to participate or face a higher premium. I really didn't appreciate the program, nor did I really understand the value of such a program until I received my first lab results. While my initial lab results were not horrible, they certainly sent out a red flag that I needed to make some health changes to insure the longevity of my life. I immediately consulted my physician; we identified areas that I needed to work on, such as diet, exercise, and rest. I changed my diet; part of which simply entailed cutting out cheese. As hard as it was, it made a difference.

By making these life style changes, I also saw improvements in my lab results. While there are still things that I need to work on, I know that if it were not for the City of Milwaukee Wellness program my health would have been declined without my knowledge and any warning signs. I am truly grateful, as well as my daughter, that the leaders of Milwaukee took this initiative to improve my live and others that are employed at the City of Milwaukee.

I obviously knew I had a weight problem; I've dealt with it the last 40 years of my life. I started to find myself getting sick more frequently and all though my overall "numbers" were coming up still good, I just wasn't feeling good. I tried the quick fix with gastric bypass surgery and that didn't work, as I put a majority of my weight back on.

After the first wellness test, I took into consideration what the suggestions were to start turning my overall health around.

Initially, I just started walking in my neighborhood, one mile, then two and so on. I now have a membership at Planet Fitness and my goal is to have myself there 4-6 days a week, for at least one hour. I also use home workout DVD's when I can't get to the gym.

My food choices have changed as well. I'm not dieting. I've made a life style shift in the food that I eat. I eat very little processed food. I try to make all my meals with one ingredient products. I'm not perfect. I don't deny myself anything-moderation is key. If I want some M&M's, I'll have a few, not half the bag. I also use Spark People to track my food and activity. This keeps me on track as far as keeping me accountable for my food intake. It's easy to forget what you put in your mouth.

I have a great support network and I don't beat myself up any more. I also don't put my weight loss on a definite time line. I set a goal, then get at it. This year I would like to get the last 60 pounds off and they will be the hardest 60 pounds. If I only lose 40, its okay because it's still weight off and the numbers are going in the right direction, down!

I use my mom as my roll model. She will be 71 years old this year and is on no medication. I want to have her health, when I'm 71! Kind Regards,

I think I am most proud of maintaining the same weight the past four years after losing approximately 25 lbs. I continue to maintain a regular workout routine and try to strive for a balanced and sensible diet. I take pride in being motivated and determined in trying to live a "healthier" lifestyle not only for myself but for my family. I ideally want to enjoy being an active parent to my 2-year old daughter and continue to teach her 'healthy habits' at an early age. I also want to maintain my fitness as a City worker

[police officer] to benefit myself and my fellow officers on these unpredictable streets. I believe what I do now will ultimately lead to a long and healthy retirement.

I wanted to become healthier and decided to make some lifestyle changes in order to make that happen. I wanted to lose weight by changing my eating habits and increasing my physical activity. I joined the Weight Watchers program where they taught me how to track and managing my eating. This process helped me to make healthier food choices, increase my water intake and encouraged the consumption of more fruits and vegetables. I'm not a person who enjoys exercising so I started dancing with the Zumba Wii as a fun form of exercise. These changes made an impact on me and my family to make better, healthier choices. Thanks,

I stay healthy and active because I want to be a better spouse and mother. I find that if I eat right and exercise daily, I'm more patient, feel less anxious and stressed, and sleep better at night. The added bonus is that I feel more confident because a healthy diet and daily exercise make me look great too!

I really don't know what to say .All I did was talk to my primary doctor and set my guidelines on taking small steps day by day mostly keeping up on my eating habits. I also started a food journal to see where my intake of calories and cholesterol was at .I found that I was snacking too much on the wrong stuff with the bad cholesterol so I switched out chips for rice cakes, nuts and a lot of canned seafood with all multi-grain crackers. In my situation with our work days .I'd park the truck and walk more when i could. I'd pack my own lunch to stop hitting the fried chicken at the deli or whatever I could grab at the gas station. I also switch to smoking cheap cigars because i hate the taste of them and my lungs were hurting from cigarettes. The doc said that's just the start of the pain I'm going to feel when i get lung cancer. So the next step for me is to go to those quit tobacco classes figure out my trigger areas and to quit it all for good. I was spending 200.00 a month or more went on injury pay and couldn't afford it anymore. So at a 1.50 a pack I only spend about 40.00 or less .You only puff them if you in hail it hurts like hell and tastes really bad putting the thought in my mind that smoking is not fun and it is hurting me and I'm saving a lot of money. I also get my blood checked 2 times a year heart disease and strokes are the major downfalls in my family tree. I also saw a show on channel 36 about the damages on tobacco use IT WAS CLEAR TO ME AFTER SEEING WHAT I SAW TO CHANGE OR AT LEAST TAKE SMALL STEPS TO QUIT. I recommend showing that tape and the pigs lung might get a better quit ratio. The gum patches chantex all had bad effects .One doc told me to quit with cigars and it working with gum and candy.

I am glad that the City chose Froedtert as a partner in the wellness program, and have found the blood tests and healthcare interviews to be quite useful in helping me monitor my health and take a closer look at my lifestyle. The program provides a strong reminder that I control the choices I make, the foods I eat and the steps (both literally and figuratively) I take to achieve better overall health.

In response to your email, I would like to let everyone know that my success with my health assessment is due to researching some issues I was having with my digestive system.

It took me twenty plus years to figure out why my stomach would bloat after every meal. I looked as if I were a few months pregnant. I took my doctors advice and incorporated more fiber into my diet, but, still I was having the same issue.

So, after doing some research on the Internet, I discovered that I could possibly be allergic to gluten. I took action and didn't eat anything that had to do with gluten. After a two week trial..., My stomach had shrunk tremendously! No more bloat or constipation!

Also, my energy level is unbelievable! I can actually get some physical activities accomplished without feeling drained.

I could go on for days how my life/health has changed for the better after learning what NOT to eat, but I think I'll end it here.

Food for thought.... Pay attention to your body! Thank you,

I have always been pretty health conscious because of my blood pressure. I try not to over eat but eat just enough to satisfy my hunger and this leaves room for a little dessert to satisfy my craving for sugar. I usually stick with healthy snacks such as fruits and certain trail mixes with nuts. I do as much walking as possible and try to stick with Yoga classes. Adopting this lifestyle has helped my blood pressure remain at a healthy level.

Three years ago a "Weight Loss Challenge" in our Building (Keenan Health Center) inspired me to make significant lifestyle changes to drop the extra weight I had gained over the years. The two behaviors I really changed were around diet and exercise. I altered my diet significantly at first, eating the same breakfast; having yogurt, fruit and healthy snack at work (every day); a light meal for dinner (soup & salad); occasional healthy snack after dinner (raisins, graham crackers, dry cereal, etc.). I also added daily exercise to my daily routine. During the challenge I often worked out twice a day, getting up before work and doing some sit-ups with a medicine ball and cycling on the stationary bike (30 minutes total). After work I'd try to get on the treadmill before dinner (30-40 minutes), every day without making excuses. Getting on the scale and seeing the weight melt off motivated me to keep going. The result, I lost 48 lbs. and won the challenge. Since the "weight loss challenge" ended, I cut the exercise to daily routine, before work (30-40 minutes). But I intensified and rounded out my morning workouts (arm curls, to treadmill, to arm curls, to stationary bike aerobic & anaerobic, ending routine with arm curls again). When the warm weather comes I'll add cycling to my daily routine again (after work with longer rides on the weekend). I've gained about 12-15 lbs. back, but feel it's more muscle than fat. I'm happy I completed the challenge and the changes I made are permanent part of my daily routine now.

I wouldn't consider me as a success story as of yet because I am still working on those healthy lifestyle changes. I was diagnosis with Diabetes a couple of months ago. My doctor wanted me to take ANOTHER pill. It was at that time that I started to take my weight serious. Before the diagnosis, I just wanted to lose weight so I started working out more and using the South Beach diet, which isn't really a diet. It's about learning to incorporate healthy eating habits into your daily life. Since starting it, I have lost 20 pounds. I still need to work at it every day (exercising, staying away from carbs, eating more

vegetables, and fish). I've learned that this healthy way of eating isn't so bad after all. I am trying new foods that I would never have thought to try before and learning how different foods affect your body. I'm on my way to a better and healthier me.

Habits drive our behavior and in order to change them you have to understand what triggers your behavior. I found that when I made fitness a priority by keeping my gym bag stocked and packed for a workout I could take it with me to work and helped me get to the gym before going home to get involved with family events. I also looked at my eating habits and focused most of my calorie intake early in the day, at least before 7:00 pm. I rarely eat any type of large meal after 7:00 at night. Also, regarding my meals, I eat several times a day focusing on healthy snacks and balanced (at least one fruit or vegetable) meals for lunch and dinner. For my large meals I limit portion sizes for foods to what could fit in the palm of my hand.

I basically decided that I wanted to live as long as possible. This program made me aware that I needed to make some serious changes in my lifestyle because there were things that I never took into consideration regarding my health that I was made aware of. I began by adding fruits and vegetables to my daily diet. I made all natural smoothies blended at home to my daily meal using fruits and vegetables, actually I made it my breakfast or lunch. I also added fiber, a bowl of high fiber cereal a day, sometimes 2. I also eliminated most starch and fried foods, going with wheat breads, turkey and chicken over beef and brown rice over white and went to 2% milk. A one a day vitamin and as much activity as I could fit in, bike riding, walks, and chasing my son. The summer was easiest because I could grill more and get outdoors but winter I had to be more disciplined and used the exercise bike. I feel better health wise and hopefully will continue to improve, I have a 6 year old son who needs me and I won't let him down, he is my all and my inspiration.

I decided to make a positive change to my diet and overall health after receiving my lab work. My cholesterol screen came back as high, as well as my blood sugar. These readings made me watch, and change some of my eating habits. Being a paramedic I see exactly what high cholesterol and diabetics do to one's health. I found it fairly easy to lower my cholesterol by simply eating better with less fast food and more vegetables. My blood sugar, although not extremely high, did slightly concern me and helped me take account of my eating habits. I also increased my workouts slightly to incorporate more cardio which aided in increasing my overall health.

BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Living a healthy lifestyle has always been something that I have strived to do, As a vegetarian for over 30 years, I have always been conscious about my health and lifestyle. Healthy food choices have always been important to me, but I knew that I needed to do more.

I eventually joined a gym, exercising 3-4 days a week has now become an important part of my lifestyle This has given me more energy and an even greater mental health attitude. My family has also benefited from my lifestyle, although they are not vegetarian, they have made healthy choices by deleting soda and limiting the amount of junk food from their diets and making more healthier food choices.

By choosing to live healthy, the only time I needed visit my doctor is during my yearly checkup. Participating in my employers Wellness program has been proved to be a benefit, it has allowed me to monitor my progress and make changes that will positively impact my life and my family.

I have learned to change my diet to include lots of green leaf vegetables and at least 64 ounces of water daily. It is important to watch portion size. By doing this, I maintain a healthy weight within my height range. It is also important for me to exercise. I have enjoyed running for more than 25 years; however, by incorporating other exercises into my routine such as yoga and light weight lifting, I find that my stress level is reduced and I am able to react better to stressful situations. As well, other body muscles are being worked and improving. What is really important to know, is that if you fall off or get side tracked for a day or so, it is ok to get back on the right track and not be discouraged.

Yes, the wellness program has helped me make significant changes that I would be willing to share in the future if given the opportunity. My partner and I were both 1-1 1/2 pack a day smokers. We tried quitting before but were never on the same schedule: one of us was in that place ready to quit but the other wasn't--and then we'd flip flop. The first evening that we went to the class we felt like we were not both in that place to quit but two weeks later, on June 20, 2011, we each smoked our last cigarette. I am very proud to say that I don't even remember that last cigarette anymore. We needed something structured, like the cessation classes, to get us both in that same place at the same time. And it worked for us. Each week we each put into a coffee canister the amount of cash we would have spent that week on cigarettes. We stopped putting it in at 7 months because there was just SO much in there! Instead we went on vacation and had an awesome time! I wish that everyone who wanted to quit would be this successful.
Have a good day, Brad, and be well.

A health scare at age 39 led to smarter eating habits, but consistent exercise was always last on our list. Surely my husband's physically-demanding job and walking the dog were enough? Nope. Through the City of Milwaukee's Workforce Health Program we learned how to increase activity, eat smart and maximize results. It has made a noticeable difference. Regular cardio/weight-lifting, a keen eye on portion-control, and even meditation now has us (disco) dancing toward a brighter future. We get inspiration from a sign that hangs next to our (now) regularly used treadmill: "Lean, serene calorie-burning machine!"

In September, 2008, I was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. I had my routine lab work done in October, 2012 and based on my results, I am no longer a diabetic. I accomplished this through education, diet and exercise. I was more conscientious of what I ate and I walked 30 minutes a day for at least 5 days a week and that is what helped my levels return to normal.
